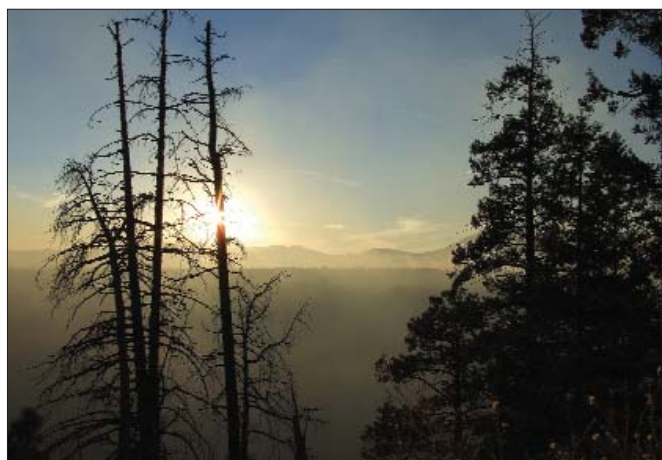




Bandelier National Monument Fire Management Program



Traffic control is an important job during a prescribed burn along a major roadway like State Road 4. Photo by Michelle Fidler.



Smoke is an unavoidable impact of prescribed burning. Photo by Michelle Fidler.

A Message From the Superintendent

As the new guy in the area, I'm learning a lot. One of the most striking things I've learned in the first few months I've been here is how significantly the landscape has changed over the last century since natural fire was removed from the scene. I've learned that natural fire, that thinned forests and refreshed grasslands, was a regular occurrence here prior to the late 1800's. Without fire, forests thicken and encroach into meadows. Thicker forests have the potential for unwanted adverse fires.

I'm glad to be arriving here at a time when fire is back in the ecology of Bandelier National Monument. It is an important part of a healthy landscape and a safe community. I greatly appreciate the support that the people of Los Alamos have provided to the Monument in our efforts to reduce dangerous fuels by returning fire to the environment. Working with our federal, state, and local partners, we will continue to use fire judiciously as a management tool to reduce the threat of wildfire in our area and to improve the health of your public lands.

Brad Traver
Superintendent

A Prescribed Fire Success Story



Bandelier's Fire Management Program Back on Track

Slow but sure best describes Bandelier National Monument's prescribed fire program since the 2000 Cerro Grande Fire. Last year 60 acres were treated during the Unit 40 Prescribed Fire. The November 2007 Upper Frijoles (Unit 9) Prescribed Fire treated approximately 1,500 acres – the park's first large scale burn in the past seven years.

In May of 2000, a planned prescribed fire ignited by the Bandelier fire staff escaped containment and became the Cerro Grande Fire. This 40,000+ acre fire destroyed over 240 homes in nearby Los Alamos and damaged public and private lands on an unprecedented scale. The fallout from this escaped prescribed fire was one of the main factors that initiated the 2000 National Fire Plan which changed fire policy across the nation. It also temporarily grounded the prescribed fire program at Bandelier.

Since that incident, the entire staff at Bandelier has worked diligently to reestablish connections with local residents, including many who lost homes or property. One of the most important things they established was the educational and informational outreach programs that were instituted in the years following 2000. Public meetings, open houses, meetings with local organizations, media interviews, news releases, presentations and handouts were all instrumental in regaining the public's support after the Cerro Grande incident. The local public remains very supportive of the efforts by the fire management staff to revive and renew their prescribed fire program.

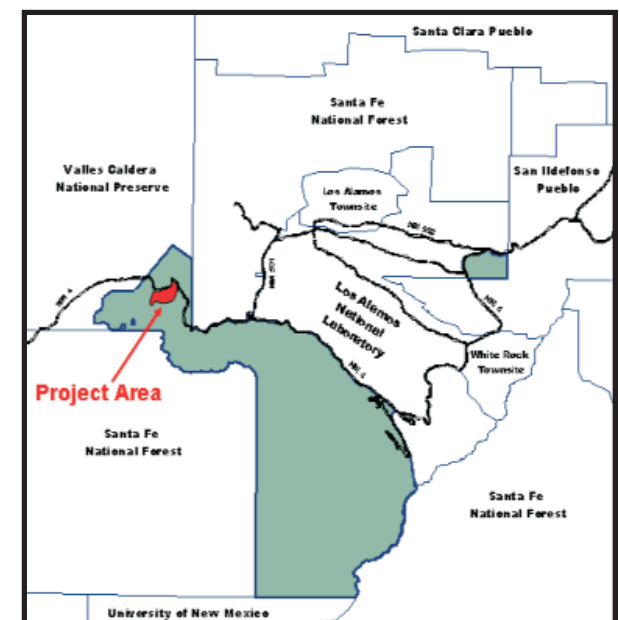
Bandelier has also worked very closely with their interagency partners in getting their prescribed fire program back on line. These

partners include Los Alamos county, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Department of Energy, National Park Service, Santa Fe National Forest, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the state of New Mexico, local pueblos and the entire Los Alamos community. These agencies formed the Interagency Wildfire Management Team which serves to identify, discuss and coordinate issues pertaining to wildfire mitigation and management in the Los Alamos area. The cooperation of these agencies is vital to the successful operation of all their fire programs, including Bandelier's.

The Upper Frijoles (Unit 9) Prescribed Fire had been planned for years, but was postponed several times due to unfavorable weather conditions. On November 7, 2007, after all of the preparations on the unit were complete and resources were in place, the Upper Frijoles (Unit 9) Prescribed Fire was finally ignited.

Since the Cerro Grande fire in 2000, everyone is asking us why we need to burn in Bandelier," said Bandelier National Monument Superintendent Brad Traver. "The answer is that we have a responsibility as a land management agency to reduce our fuels and provide buffers to our neighbors. We have too much fuel in many hard-to-reach canyons. We cannot let these canyons become pathways for wildfires to travel into surrounding communities. We know

Continued on Page 2



Map showing location of the most recent prescribed burn

that this is an issue that must be addressed collaboratively and with the full support of the community.”

Many measures were taken to ensure the fire stayed within prescription. A 600-ft buffer was mechanically thinned along State Highway 4 and Forest Road 289. Fire lines were built around every section of the burn unit. More than 100 interagency firefighters, including 8 engines, 1 helicopter, 3 crews, several water tenders were dedicated to the burn. Additional contingency resources were identified and available if needed. The colder temperatures at night and shorter days added an additional element of control.

The burn unit was divided up into small sections totaling approximately 1,500 acres. The project began with a hand ignited blacklining operation along the northern and eastern edges of the unit bordering State Highway 4 and Forest Road 289. This provided fire personnel with a buffer zone of burned fuel between the highway and the interior of the unit. Firefighters worked slowly and deliberately during



Crews monitor the burn. Photo by Kristen Honig.

this operation to make sure the fire did not cross the unit boundaries. Crews then began hand igniting the interior of the burn unit. A helicopter with a Plastic Sphere Dispenser Machine (PSD) was utilized for aerial ignition in areas of the burn unit with steep and dangerous terrain.

Part of the success of the project involved the cooperation received from two private land owners whose land is surrounded by the monument. They both worked in conjunction with the fire and monument staff to ensure that all the necessary agreements had been made prior to ignition. One of the land owners did not want his property to have fire on it so mitigations were put in place to prevent it from occurring. The other landowner had already been doing fuel reduction treatments on his property in preparation for the prescribed fire. They agreed to allow fire personnel to burn debris piles on their property and then follow that up with a broadcast burn.



Crews make sure the fire stays within the prescribed boundaries. Photo by David Eaker.

“I didn’t want to clear the fuels on my property at first because I liked having the trees,” said park inholder Sam Gardner. “But after several wildfires burned through the area, I started thinning the fuels on my property. The next step for me was a burn like this. It would have been too much for me to take this on safely on my own. I’m so glad they could step in and help. Everyone who lives in the mountains needs to be responsible with their fuels, otherwise they’re just sitting ducks,” he added.

This successful completion of the Upper Frijoles (Unit 9) Prescribed Fire has helped get Bandelier’s fire program back on track and will allow them to be able to carry on the policy of using fire as management tool to help perpetuate the resource values for which the monument was established.



The result is a forest with less dense understory and less prone to large crown fires. Photo by Michelle Fidler.

Local Area Fire Information

To report a fire call 911
Remember the following when you have questions about wildfire, prescribed fires, or fire restrictions:
-Bandelier National Monument, fire management office (505)662-7065 x 28 or e-mail at band_fire@nps.gov.
-Santa Fe National Forest call 1-877-FIRE(3473).
-For more fire information go to www.nmfireinfo.com.

2008 Projects

Maintenance of the **previously thinned areas** along Highway 4 from Ponderosa Campground working East toward the Park Entrance Road and continuing to the Park boundary.

Headquarters area prescribed burn

Mechanical thinning east of Highway 4 in Sandoval County just beyond the Los Alamos County line

Prescribed fire on 50-100 acres on the mesa west of Frijoles Canyon and Bandelier Headquarters

Status

The project will be on-going throughout the summer of 2008.

120 acre burn in Frijoles Canyon around the Visitor Center, Cottonwood picnic area, the main loop trail, Alcove House and Bandelier Headquarters. Currently scheduled for late Aug-Oct 2008. The actual burn will likely be accomplished in 2-3 days once conditions are right.

113 acres of mixed conifer will be thinned between Highway 4 and the Santa Fe National Forest boundary with Bandelier. Could begin as soon as August, 2008.

This burn is in the Bandelier Wilderness in an area previously thinned in a lop and scatter treatment. Fall 2008.



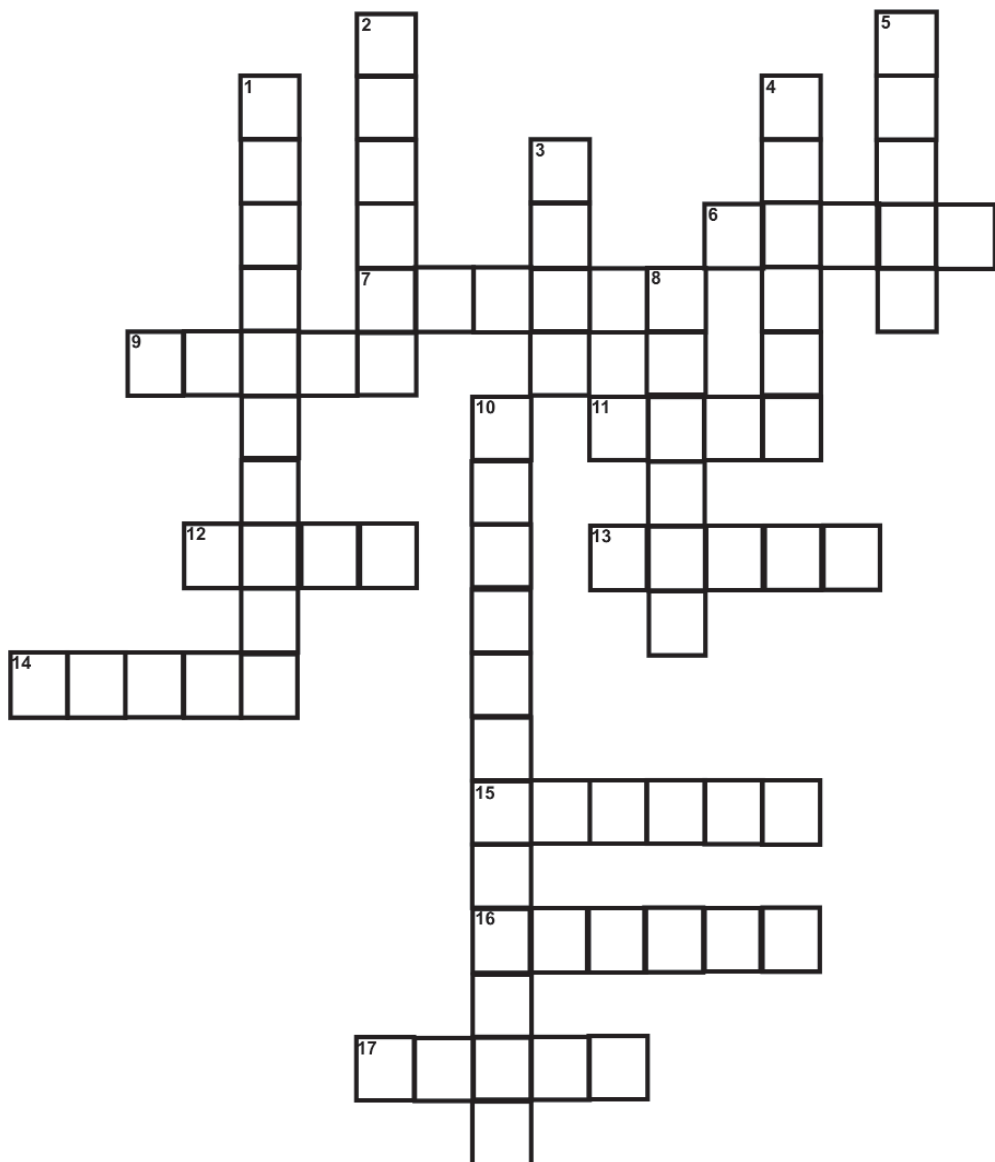
“A prescribed fire success story requires the efforts of a hard-working, dedicated team of firefighters and the support of the entire community. A prescribed fire success story can create short-term sacrifices for both firefighters who work long hours in smoky, potentially hazardous conditions and the public who must endure trail closures, traffic backups, and smoke-filled air. Working together a safer overall environment with less threat of large-scale catastrophic fire is created. We thank everyone who has joined us in this effort.”

Gary Kemp, Bandelier Fire Management Officer

Photos by Michelle Fidler, David Eaker, and Kristen Honig.



Fun Fire Activities



ACROSS

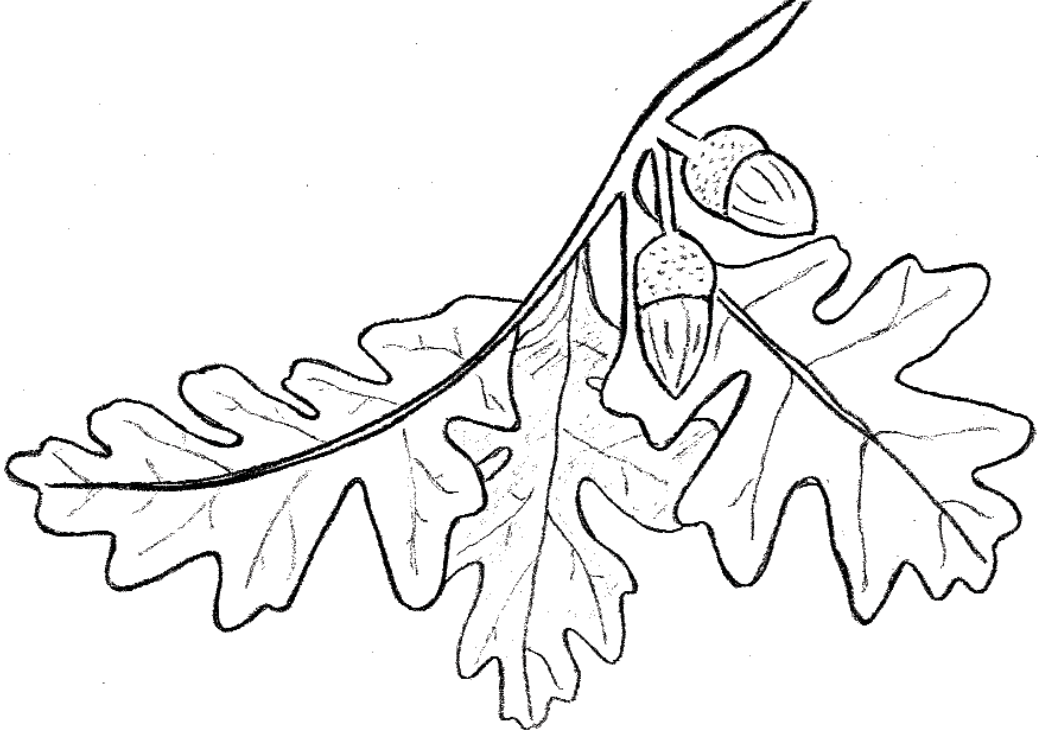
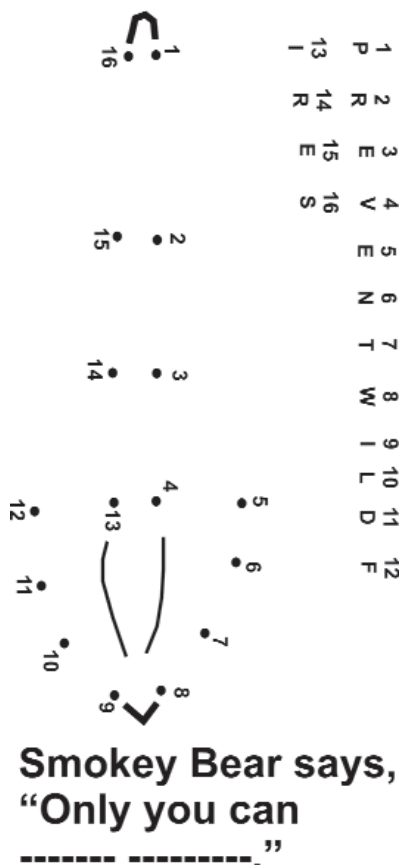
- 6. special fire-resistant cloth used to make clothes to protect fire fighters
- 7. wood that isn't flaming but is still hot
- 9. a group of these big plants makes a forest
- 11. what firefighters call anything that will burn
- 12. to have this, oxygen, heat, and fuel are required
- 13. type of vehicle used by firefighters
- 14. when a fire gets into the top of the trees
- 15. to start a fire
- 16. fine fuels that help start a fire
- 17. an unavoidable side effect of fire

DOWN

- 1. what we do to avoid fires
- 2. indicates a fire is burning actively
- 3. a group of 20 wildland firefighters makes one of these
- 4. one of the basic hand tools used by wildland firefighters
- 5. evergreen trees with needles
- 8. dropped on some fires instead of water to stop the fire from growing
- 10. all the conditions are right to have a fire that will make the forest more healthy

Use these words in the crossword puzzle.

- | | | | | |
|------------|-------|--------------|--------|--------|
| IGNITE | TRUCK | TINDER | CROWN | SHOVEL |
| SMOKE | FIRE | FLAMES | EMBERS | CREW |
| TREES | PINES | NOMEX | SLURRY | FUEL |
| PREVENTION | | PRESCRIPTION | | |



Complete the dot to dot to the left and color the Gambel's Oak leaves above. Gambel's Oaks are one of the first plants to grow in a burned area, forging the way for other plants to follow.

FIRE CURRICULUM FOR TEACHERS

A 6th grade fire curriculum, "Investigating Fire Ecology in Ponderosa Pine Forests", is available on-line at www.nps.gov/band or a printed copy may be requested from Chris Judson at the Bandelier Visitor Center, (505)672-3861 x 517.

